

# **Head Start Family Voices Pilot Study**

**OMB Information Collection Request  
0970-0355**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part B**

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Submitted By:  
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Aerospace Building  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20447

Project Officers: Mary Mueggenborg and Maria Woolverton

## **B. STATISTICAL METHODS (USED FOR COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS)**

### **B1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods**

The sample for the HSFV Pilot Study will include a purposive sample of Head Start and Early Head Start programs, parents, and staff.

We will draw the sample from a group of Head Start and Early Head Start programs with which Mathematica has existing relationships, due to their involvement in our other Head Start and Early Head Start projects (for example, the Head Start and Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey [FACES and Baby FACES, respectively] and the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers [Q-CCIIT] study). From that universe, we will select a purposive sample of five Head Start and five Early Head Start grantees, for a total of 10 programs. We will select eight programs located within proximity to each of Mathematica's five office locations (Princeton, NJ; Washington, DC; Cambridge, MA; Chicago, IL; and Oakland, CA), and we will select two programs located in the south. Of the ten selected programs, we will recruit two in rural locations.

Next, we will ask selected programs to help us identify and recruit home visitors and family services staff (including family service workers, family services managers, and family services coordinators), as well as a diverse sample of families for the pilot. We describe this process in section B2 below. To be included in data collection activities, parents and staff must be able to respond to interview and questionnaire items in English or Spanish.

We recognize that the respondent universe for the pilot excludes programs in the full universe that may be of interest (for example, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start [MSHS] or American Indian/Alaska Native [AI/AN] programs, programs in Puerto Rico). Selection of programs that are in proximity to Mathematica offices also somewhat over-represents programs in the northeast, relative to their prevalence in the full Head Start universe. However, our sample of selected programs will include a range of geographic locations, including representation of urban and rural sites. Our approach will result in a sample of programs located in at least six of the ten Head Start regions (excluding regions for MSHS and AI/AN programs). While parents who speak a language other than English or Spanish will be excluded from the pilot, our recruitment process will seek to identify and involve families with a range of experiences and characteristics that are relevant to family engagement.

### **B2. Procedures for Collection of Information**

Recruitment and data collection activities for the HSFV Pilot Study will commence upon OMB approval and are expected to last approximately six weeks. Mathematica staff will schedule the data collection activities based on the program's and respondent's availability.

We include the data collection instruments described below in Attachments A1-A6 and additional supporting documents in Attachments B1-B3. We will select and recruit programs using the procedures noted above in section B1. We will send program directors in selected programs a *Program Recruitment Advance Letter*. We will then contact programs by phone using

the *Program Recruitment Script*. We will work with the participating programs to identify and recruit a diverse sample of families. As part of initial conversations with selected programs, we will query directors about the characteristics of families served by the program, including the percentage of families who receive home-based and center-based services, are from Spanish-speaking households, and who experience different types of needs (including teen mothers, single-parent families, expectant mothers, families who live in transitional housing or may be homeless, and parents who may have mental health problems). We will use this information, captured with the *Program Recruitment Screener*, to identify the range of families available to participate in interviews at each program.

After reviewing the information obtained from the *Program Recruitment Screener*, we will ask programs to identify and recruit a given number of families with specific characteristics for participation in the study. In addition, when recruiting parents for the pilot, we will request that programs identify both parents who are challenging to engage and those who engage more readily. This process will ensure that we appropriately capture the range of Head Start and Early Head Start programs and families. We will ask programs to complete the *Participant Recruitment Form*, providing information on parents and staff who agree to participate in the pilot (including respondent names, dates/time of scheduled interviews, and contact information for those who will complete the interviews by phone). In advance of the interview, programs will ask parents and staff identified for participation in the pilot to complete an informed consent form, which includes information about the pilot study activities.

Interviews will be conducted with Head Start and Early Head Start parents, home visitors, and family services staff. Interviewers will conduct half of the interviews with parents and staff while onsite at the program; the remainder will be conducted by phone. A subset of the interviews completed with parents will be conducted in Spanish. At the conclusion of the interview, interviewers will query respondents about questions that were perceived as difficult for them to respond to. In addition, interviewers will complete a brief questionnaire with parents and staff about their background. We will balance the administration of the interview forms across the aforementioned subgroups in an effort to represent the perspectives of families with varying needs in each of the topical areas.

### **B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse**

#### ***Expected Response Rates***

Mathematica has an established, successful record of gaining program cooperation and obtaining high response rates with staff and families in research studies of Head Start, Early Head Start, and other preschool programs. We anticipate that Head Start program staff and families will be motivated to participate because they are vested in the success of the program. To ensure participating parents and staff can understand the *Consent Form* and *Parent and Staff Questionnaires*, we designed the documents at a 10th-grade readability level. We worded items in the *Parent and Staff Qualitative Interviews* using simple language free of idioms that are difficult to translate into Spanish (or other languages). Later, we discuss gifts of appreciation that

will be offered to parents and staff for their participation, which will help ensure a high level of participation.

In addition, we will work with Head Start and Early Head Start programs with which we have existing relationships, and we will ask them to identify and assist us in recruiting staff and parents who are willing to participate in the study. Building on our experience and existing relationships with programs as a basis for recruitment will serve to minimize nonresponse by allowing us to smoothly gain access, ease recruitment of families, and make arrangements for meeting with staff and families. If a parent or staff member who has initially agreed to participate in the pilot is unable to complete the interview as scheduled, we will ask the program to recruit a replacement. Based on our experience conducting interviews with Head Start and Early Head Start programs in prior studies using similar methods (such as FACES and Baby FACES), we anticipate achieving at least an 80% response rate.

#### ***Dealing with Nonresponse***

Given our approach to recruitment of programs and participants, we do not anticipate issues associated with nonresponse.

#### ***Maximizing Response Rates***

We will offer parent and staff respondents a gift card valued at \$20 as a token of appreciation to improve cooperation. We will offer programs a gift card valued at \$200 to thank them for assisting us in recruiting families and staff. Use of the *Participant Recruitment Form* is intended to maximize our ability to recruit families with a range of key characteristics.

#### **B4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken**

The items included in the *Program Recruitment Screener* and the *Parent and Staff Questionnaires* are either identical or similar to questions used in previous Mathematica or national surveys. As such, they have been thoroughly tested on large, diverse samples.

Ahead of the pilot, we conducted exploratory interviews with Head Start and Early Head Start parents and staff to identify topical areas to explore in the area of parent engagement. Each question included as part of these exploratory interviews was asked of no more than nine respondents. Based on our analysis of this information, we developed qualitative interview protocols and conducted interviews with Head Start and Early Head Start parents and staff (again, asking each question of no more than nine respondents). While we believe that these pre-pilot activities have resulted in interview questions that are clear and understandable to the target population, as a further test, at the conclusion of the pilot interviews, interviewers will probe respondents for more information about any questions that may have been unclear. This information will be useful for revising the interview protocols and for developing the final report and instrument package.

## **B5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data**

Mary Mueggenborg and Maria Woolverton, Federal Contracting Officer's Representative (COR); Dr. Nikki Aikens, project director; and Dr. Eileen Bandel, deputy project director, lead the team. Additional staff contributed to the design of the HSFV Pilot Study, including Dr. Judie Jerald, study consultant; Ms. Susan Sprachman, project quality assurance advisor; and Dr. Elizabeth Cavadel. In addition to these staff, Ms. Lauren Akers and Ms. Julia Lyskawa will conduct analysis and coding of the collected data. A team of eight to ten Mathematica survey associates will participate in data collection efforts.

Inquiries regarding the statistical aspects of the study's planned analysis should be directed to:

Dr. Nikki Aikens, Project Director

Dr. Eileen Bandel, Deputy Project Director

Ms. Mary Mueggenborg, Federal Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), ACF, DHHS