

Building Bridges and Bonds (B3)

**OMB Information Collection Request
0970-0356**

Supporting Statement

Part A

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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

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A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requests permission to contact organizations for the purpose of gathering preliminary information about the fatherhood field for the Building Bridges and Bond (B3) study. Permission to contact organizations for this purpose is requested under ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections. The study team will collect information relevant to understanding the field and discussing the field's interest in the B3 evaluation strategies and priorities.

Study Background

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE) has launched the Building Bridges and Bonds (B3) study. Using a mix of research methods, this five-year study plans to partner with programs that serve low-income fathers to understand the effectiveness of strategies used to engage fathers and help them become self-sufficient responsible parents in healthy relationships. The study will be designed to systematically test innovative, evidence-informed approaches to the core components of fatherhood programs that reflect the latest developments in behavioral science, adult skill-building, and other relevant disciplines. The study also plans to test new strategies programs can use to improve recruitment and participant engagement. Since 2006 Congress has authorized dedicated funding for discretionary grants from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) to programs in order to promote responsible fatherhood. B3 comes at an important time for research on fatherhood programming. Programs use a number of promising models to work with fathers, but rigorous studies have not yet shown which are effective and worth expanding or replicating. B3 is one of several new studies funded by ACF taking complementary approaches to provide needed evidence about program strategies to serve low-income fathers and their families.

The current information collection request is for gathering preliminary information about the fatherhood field to inform the design of B3.

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

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

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Approach

The purpose of the current information collection request is to request approval to gather preliminary information about the fatherhood field, and to explore with fatherhood programs the research questions that are of interest to them and the design options that are feasible. After this information-gathering phase, B3 plans to submit a full information request package for future data collection for the study, including baseline data collection, implementation data collection, and follow-up data collection for measuring impacts.

The study expects to develop a structured demonstration project in six sites to test strong, evidence-informed approaches to the core components of responsible fatherhood programs, along with strategies designed to promote greater engagement and participation of fathers. There are very few examples of "proven" models for disadvantaged fathers. However, in the next few years, new evidence will emerge from several new ACF studies. B3 intends to complement the other ACF studies, such as Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation and The Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation (FaMLE) and

Cross-site Project. PACT and FaMLE are investigating the impacts of fatherhood programs as they exist in the field. B3 will complement these projects by looking inside the black box and testing the impacts of different features or components of programs, rather than the programs as a whole. To the extent possible, B3 will aim to use outcome measures that are similar to those for the most closely related studies.

There is currently limited information available about the core components of fatherhood programs or what approaches are most effective in improving fathers' outcomes. Programs funded through OFA must provide services that span three core domains – economic stability, responsible parenting, and healthy marriage/couple relationships – as well as recruitment and engagement strategies. However, how programs approach the services varies widely. For example, some programs target noncustodial fathers, others resident fathers, and some serve both. While fatherhood programs usually offer a range of services that cover each of the three domains, many have a particular emphasis, such as employment or parenting. This variability in fatherhood programs that are operating today – both those that receive OFA funding and those that do not -- has implications for the research questions that B3 will test and for B3's study design. For this reason the study team is requesting permission to contact programs to gather information about their current practices and ask for their input on potential research questions to test in B3. The information collection will take place in 2015 to ensure that the study design can be finalized by the end of the year and baseline data collection can begin in 2016. The remainder of this section describes the study team's plans for contacting programs and how the information will be used.

Research Questions

This study will explore the following research questions:

1. What is the range of characteristics of fatherhood programs currently operating in the field, including the programs' administrative structures, services offered, community service contexts, and capacities?
2. Given the proposed research questions for B3 and potential design options, what feedback do fatherhood programs have in terms of a) the importance of the questions to the field; b) their interest in the proposed interventions to test; and c) the feasibility of the potential design options?

Study Design

This collection serves as a preliminary step to gather information that will inform the design of the larger B3 study. The study team will consult program experts in OFA, have individualized conversations with practitioner and research experts in the field, and conduct internet searches to identify the sample of up to 30 fatherhood programs to contact. We will also conduct a public webinar to share information about the proposed study and invite interested programs to contact the study team. No information will be collected as part of this webinar. The study team will select programs to contact based on the program size, experience operating fatherhood programming, and whether the program expressed an interest in informing the B3 design or were recommended to do so by an expert. A limitation is that this process will not yield a representative sample of fatherhood programs; however, it will identify many of the larger programs that have a history of working with low-income men, and programs that use innovative approaches.

Upon OMB approval of the information collection instruments, the study team will send each program director a request for a one-hour telephone call via email (see B3_Phone Meeting Email Template). The email will be addressed to program directors. It will introduce the study and its goals, the team that is doing the study on HHS' behalf, and offer suggested times for a phone meeting. Attached to the email will be the project description (see B3_Project Description) and a list of questions we hope to collect

during the phone call (see B3_Topics for B3 Meeting). The phone meeting is voluntary. The study team will lead the telephone meeting using a semi-structured protocol (see B3_Semi Structured Protocol for Initial Phone Call). The study team will answer any questions about the study and ask for select programmatic information, such as their administrative structure, experience, target population, and their program size. The protocol is designed to collect the minimum information necessary to allow us to understand the variation of programming in the field, the range of perspectives on the B3 study, and whether particular study design options will be feasible given the structure of a range of fatherhood programs. The study team will contact up to 30 programs for an initial telephone call, with up to 3 staff per program participating in the call. _

With a select group of programs (up to 15, with up to 3 staff per program participating), the study team will follow-up the initial phone call with a request for further discussion. An agenda will be used to guide the discussions (see B3_Agenda for Program Staff Meeting). The study team will use a PowerPoint presentation to describe the study goals and provide examples of draft research questions and intervention designs (see B3_Presentation). Using a semi-structured protocol (see B3_Semi Structured Protocol for Teleconference or Program Visit), the study team will seek to gain a better understanding of the program's flow and solicit feedback about the potential study designs. In most cases, the follow-up will involve an in-person visit to the site; visits will be replaced with teleconferences whenever possible. Subsequent visits and teleconferences will be scheduled, as needed and with a narrower pool of programs, if the study team needs additional time to gather the information.

A limitation of this process is the information will be gathered from only a selection of fatherhood programs, however the selection of programs will be prioritized in such a way to maximize the range of responses possible that may inform B3 design and planning.

There are no quantitative components to this study.

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

There are two main data collection efforts involved with the current request for approval.

(1) B3_Semi Structured Protocol for Initial Phone Call: An initial one-hour phone call that will use a semi-structured interview protocol. For this collection, the study team will also utilize an email template, the project description, and a handout that lists topics for the discussion.

(2) B3_Semi Structured Protocol for Teleconference or Program Visit: Subsequent visits or teleconferences based on a semi-structured interview protocol. For this collection, the study team will also utilize a site visit agenda template, the project description, and presentation slides.

Both protocols cover similar research questions. However, there is additional time allotted for the visits and follow-up teleconferences to allow for more detail to be shared about the B3 study, and for the program to share more details about its services and operations.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The burden on fatherhood programs is minimal and the study team plans to use improved information technology wherever possible. When information is available from the internet, it will supplement requests for information. To the extent possible, meetings will be done by telephone to reduce burden on program operators and their stakeholders.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

To our knowledge, systematic information about current fatherhood program services and operations is not available. The study team has reviewed the list of current Responsible Fatherhood grantees, looked at their websites and enrollment information, and spoken with experts in the field. The information needed to address the study's research questions was not found.

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

We expect most of the programs in the study will be small, non-profit organizations. Burden will be minimized for respondents by restricting the interview length to the minimum required, by conducting telephone and in-person discussions at times convenient for the respondents, and by requiring no record-keeping or written responses on the part of the programs.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

The study team proposes a multi-staged process for gathering information from local programs. This preliminary step will provide critical information for designing the rest of the B3 study. Without the information requested for this phase of the study, it would be difficult to move forward with the next stages (e.g., site recruitment, baseline and follow-up surveys). The approach attempts to limit the scope of conversations to just the information needed for the current phase of the project. Further, by conducting initial telephone calls with a larger number of programs, we will avoid undue burden because not all conversations will warrant follow-up visits or telephone calls.

A7. Special Circumstances

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

A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation

Federal Register Notice and Comments

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995)), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection activity. This notice was published on September 15, 2014, Volume 79, Number 178, page 54985, and provided a 60-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, the government did not receive any comments in response to the Federal Register notice.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

A panel of experts in the fatherhood field (including both practitioners and researchers) provided consultation to the study team and members of ACF on January 13-14, 2015.

A9. Incentives for Respondents

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each

subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. Respondents are not considered human subjects, but they will still be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, that some of the information they provide may be shared with OPRE to help us design the study, and that any information they request to be kept private will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Program directors will review materials and speak with a study team member about their fatherhood program. These persons will not incur any expense other than the time spent answering questions.

Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection

Instrument	Total/Annual Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
B3_Semi-Structured Protocol for Initial Phone Call	90	1	1	90	\$29.83	\$2,684.70
B3_Semi-Structured Protocol for Teleconference or Program Visit	60	1	3	180	\$29.83	\$5,369.40
Estimated Annual Burden Total				270		\$8,054.10

Total Annual Cost

To compute the total estimated annual cost, the total burden hours were multiplied by the estimated average hourly wage for local program directors (see table above). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Population Survey 2014, the median hourly wage for full-time employees over age 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher is \$29.83.

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$80,000. Annual costs to the Federal government will be \$80,000 for the proposed data collection under this OMB clearance number (0970-0356).

A15. Change in Burden

This is a new data collection.

A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication

The information collected will be used primarily to plan the research design and subsequent data collection efforts for B3. Initial calls to program directors for the purpose of information gathering will take place starting in late Quarter 2 2015 and continue into Quarter 3 2015. Site visits and additional teleconferences will occur during Quarters 2 and 3 2015. There are no plans to publish the information collected under this request. Plans for use of data collected during the project will be explained in a subsequent package.

A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.