

Family Leave and Lower Income Families: Linkages between Mothers' Return to Work, Leave, and Child Care

ASPE Generic Information Collection Request
OMB No. 0990-0421

Supporting Statement – Section B

Submitted: December 14, 2017

Program Official/Project Officer

Pamela Winston, Ph.D.
Social Science Analyst
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
200 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC 20201
(202) 401-6615
pamela.winston@hhs.gov

Section B – Data Collection Procedures

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This is an exploratory study in which we seek to learn about the experiences and perspectives of low-income mothers who have used the state paid family leave programs in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. The participants in the nine 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., in collaboration with subcontractor Cicatelli Associates, Inc.

The contractor will work with community organizations that serve low-income women with young children in three states—California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island—to recruit interested and appropriate participants. Expected focus group locations are: Alameda, Fresno and Los Angeles Counties (CA); Essex, Sussex, and Warren Counties (NJ), and Providence County (RI). Up to three focus groups are expected to be conducted in Spanish. Staff with the 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)
- Worked before and/or after childbirth
- Eligible for, and participated in, the PFL program in the particular state.

We will also seek a general mix of races and ethnicities across the focus groups. 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 15 names of potential participants; from this list we expect that 10-12 will confirm with the contractor (by means of a screener (Attachment A)) their willingness and appropriateness to participate, and about 8 will in

fact participate in each of the groups. We expect about 72 participants in total (8 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:

- Mothers' use of PFL
- Attachment to work and their pre-birth employers
- Specific reasons for—and facilitators of—returns to work
- Actions taken related to work and child care arrangements after childbirth, and
- Other experiences with PFL as a work support.

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).

Participants will use a pseudonym during the focus group discussions and for the demographics questionnaire. All data will be de-identified so as not to reveal the respondent. Participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement at the start of the discussion that reiterates the voluntary nature of participation in the group and their right to decline to respond to any discussion questions or to leave the discussion group at any time.

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 that 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 (meet the sample criteria), as well as to confirm their participation leading up to the focus group.
- Contractor staff may contact potential participants two to three times to encourage participation by those who have expressed their interest and willingness.

- \$40 will be provided to remunerate focus group participants for costs associated with child care, transportation, and lost wages, given their time and effort in coming to and participating in the focus groups.

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 as a pilot in Alameda County (CA) in January. This will provide time for the contractor and federal project staff to discuss what worked more or less effectively, and to make revisions prior to the remaining 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 (3) Lauren Antelo, Senior Social Science Analyst at HHS/ASPE, email: lauren.antelo@hhs.gov, phone: 202-260-6850.