

Annual Survey of Refugees

OMB Information Collection Request

0970 - 0033

Supporting Statement

Part A

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Submitted By:
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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) seeks approval for extension of the information collection for the Annual Survey of Refugees.

Study Background

The ACF Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is charged with helping refugees resettle in the U.S., with the primary goal of rapid self-sufficiency and adjustment. Since 1975, when Southeast Asian refugees first began arriving in the United States, ORR (and its predecessors) has commissioned annual surveys of the refugee population.

These data are used in ORR's Annual Report to Congress. ORR also makes aggregated findings of the survey available to the general public and uses the findings for purposes of program planning, policy-making, and future budgeting processes.

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

A primary purpose of the Annual Survey of Refugees has been to enable ORR to fulfill its reporting requirement to Congress. The Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires that the Secretary of Health and Human Services submit an Annual Report to Congress. This report "shall contain an updated profile of the employment and labor force statistics for refugees who have entered the United States within the five fiscal-year period immediately preceding the fiscal year within which the report is to be made...as well as a description of the extent to which refugees received the forms of assistance or services under this chapter during that period."

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Approach

The Annual Survey of Refugees is a yearly, nationally-representative sample survey of refugee households entering the United States in the previous five fiscal years.

The current request is for extension of the previously approved survey instrument for three additional years. We propose updates to survey administration procedures to reflect experiences in the field to date and best practices in adaptive survey administration, as described in Supplemental Statement B.

Research Questions

The purpose of the survey is to obtain information on the adjustment and self-sufficiency of refugee entrants to life in the United States. The survey instrument emphasizes measures of income, employment, and labor force participation, English language ability, and the utilization of Government services.

Study Design

The ASR is a household survey, where a primary respondent is asked socio-demographic questions about all members of the reference household. Refugee Principal Applicants, whose case was the basis of the household's claim for refugee status, are the focal respondents.

As discussed in more detail in Supporting Statement B, the study uses a stratified probability sample. Each year, a fresh cross-sectional sample will be drawn from ORR administrative data. The principal stratum is year of entry to the United States. The data collection is designed to be representative of three entry cohorts, as length of time since arrival is of primary interest for congressional reporting and policy use of the resulting data.

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

Data collection includes a telephone interview with sampled refugee principal applicants (see Appendix A). The survey is ongoing, conducted annually. This ICR covers three annual administrations of the survey.

We will also send participants a letter of introduction that asks them update their contact information, if needed (see Appendix B).

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The survey will employ Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to:

- Reduce the use of paper and lower printing costs
- Centrally manage the telephone interviewing process
- Standardize responses and increase accuracy
- Increase number of interviews conducted per day
- Allow rapid collation and statistical analysis of data
- Enhance quality control

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

No similar data are readily available from other sources. Though ORR receives information from many sources on refugee populations present in the U.S., there is no representative information on refugees' economic and social adjustment over the five-year period after arrival, including the use of mainstream public benefits primarily administered by states.

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Not applicable.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

The survey must be conducted on a continuous basis because The Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to submit an Annual Report to Congress on the Refugee Resettlement Program. If ORR cannot complete the survey on an annual basis, it will be out of compliance with statute.

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 October 16, 2018, Volume 83, Number 200, page 52220, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. A copy of this notice is attached as Appendix D. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

None

A9. Incentives for Respondents

Please see Supplemental Statement B, Section B3 for an overview of the ASR study design features intended to maximize response rate and minimize non-response bias. As one part of an overall design to secure quality data, and to provide continuity with this survey program, the research team proposes that respondents are offered a \$25 gift card upon completion of the survey.

In previous survey administrations, the ASR has offered the \$25 incentive to refugees completing the 30-minute ASR telephone survey on behalf of their household. Please see Supplemental Statement B (Section B3) for more information on the ASR's demonstrated high level of respondent participation conditional on successful contact (74-75%) and finding of no substantial non-response bias on observable characteristics using this incentive structure.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

The Refugee Arrivals Data System (RADS), from which data are extracted for the purposes of developing a survey sample and producing statistical weights, is a Privacy Act System of Records (System of Records Number # 09-80-0325, published 07/18/2016). This data collection requires the transfer of PII from RADS to the ASR contractor.

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed

of planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

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 will develop a Data Safety and Monitoring Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' personally identifiable 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. All project team members with access to data will sign a confidentiality statement.

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive information during storage and transmission. The Contractor shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information, in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. The Contractor shall: ensure that this standard is incorporated into the Contractor's property management/control system; establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and other applicable Federal and Departmental regulations.

Per approved survey administration procedures, PII used in survey administration is stored in a separate database from survey responses. Information collected by the Annual Survey of Refugees will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Previously Approved Information Collections

Total Burden Previously Approved

The previously-approved annual burden was 1,100 hours.

Burden Remaining from Previously Approved Information Collection

Previously approved information collection will be complete at the time this request is approved.

Newly Requested Information Collections

We seek extension of the study's instrument for three additional years.

Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Annual Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
ORR-9 Annual Survey of Refugees	6000	2000	1	0.5	1000	\$23.60	\$23,600
Introductory Letter	6000	2000	1	0.05	100	\$23.60	\$2360
Estimated Annual Total					1,100		\$25,960

Total Annual Cost

The estimated average hourly wage of refugees, derived from the 2016 Annual Survey of Refugees, is \$11.80. To account for fringe benefits and overhead, the rate is multiplied by two, which is \$23.60. The total annual cost to respondents is estimated to be \$25,960.

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 \$2,145,000. Annual costs to the Federal government will be \$715,000 for the proposed data collection.

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Project Management and Communication	\$86,000
Data Security and Storage	\$ 21,000
Survey Administration	\$436,000
Data Preparation, Analysis, and Documentation	\$ 172,000
Total	\$715,000

A15. Change in Burden

This request is to continue data collection for an additional three years. We do not propose any change in annual burden from the previously approved OMB package.

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

The Annual Survey of Refugees is fielded yearly in the calendar Spring, and tabulated soon after. Tabulations are published in the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s Annual Report to Congress. The yearly publication date of this report is determined by the Administration for Children and Families.

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.