

MEMO

To: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Budget Management
Fr: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families
Re: Revisions to survey protocols for Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program (OMB control number 0970-0526)
Da: July 31, 2019

Based on feedback gathered through pilot testing, we are proposing minor updates to two surveys for the Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program (OMB control number 0970-0526). This memo outlines the proposed revisions and the corresponding rationale for the changes. The proposed changes do not increase participant burden and can be considered administrative/non-substantive changes. We are submitting the following updated surveys: Appendix A – Survey for State Refugee Coordinators (SRCs) and Appendix B – Survey for URM Program Directors.

Pilot Testing

We pilot tested the two surveys with three respondents each. Respondents completed a survey and a follow-up questionnaire, and then spoke with study staff briefly to discuss any additional questions or feedback.

Proposed Revisions to Survey Instruments

Based on feedback from the pilot respondents, the study team made the following non-substantive changes to the two surveys.

Revisions to terminology and simplifications throughout the surveys

- In both surveys, the term “URM program” was replaced with either “URM Program” (capital ‘P’) or “URM provider agency.”
 - Rationale: Pilot respondents were confused by the use of the term “URM program”; the team is now using “URM Program” to refer to the federal program and “URM provider agency” to refer to the agencies that provide services directly to URM youth.
- In both surveys, wording was revised for the sake of brevity or clarity. For example, the follow-up question in Question 17 of the Program Director survey was revised to remove the clause “for foster parents for URM youth, beyond the standard pre-service foster care training curriculum” because the previous question and the use of a skip pattern in the survey already makes clear that the question refers to foster parents.
 - Rationale: Pilot respondents suggested that the survey be reviewed/ revised for wordiness. The study team streamlined the questions to be as brief and clear as possible.

Revisions to Specific Survey Questions

- Question 4 in the SRC survey and Question 22 in the Program Director survey were revised to add an additional response option in the scale of “Yearly” between “Never” and “A few times a year.” Also on this question, in the SRC survey, one of the rows was revised from “URM program(s)” to instead ask about provider agencies in their state, provider agencies outside their state, and SRCs outside of their state. The Program Director version of this question was also revised to mirror the updates made to the SRC survey.

- Rationale: Pilot respondents indicated that the available options did not include all possible frequencies of communication. For example, in some instances communication occurs once per year. Respondents also indicated that they sometimes communicate with URM provider agencies and SRCs outside of their state in addition to those inside their state.
- Question 7 in the SRC survey and Question 25 in the Program Director survey were revised to allow respondents to more accurately describe the roles that child welfare agencies (both public and private) play within the URM Program. An additional row for “Licenses foster parents...” was also added to these questions.
 - Rationale: Pilot respondents indicated that the question as previously written did not include all possible roles child welfare agencies play, and did not account for the different administrative structures of, and custody arrangements with, child welfare agencies. The proposed question matrix will allow respondents to describe program operations more fully and accurately. An additional row for licensing foster parents was added because respondents indicated that this is another activity performed by the child welfare agency that is distinct from the other activities.
- The series of questions in both surveys that ask about Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) and Independent Living benefits was revised for clarity (Q11 – 14 In Appendix A and Q30 – 33 in Appendix B). Several questions were condensed, and the question about whether youth need to apply for ETVs or Independent Living benefits was cut. The term “Independent Living benefits” was changed to “services and benefits to support a successful transition to adulthood.”
 - Rationale: Pilot respondents found this series of questions confusing given the structure of these services. The study team added definitions where appropriate to help respondents better understand the question and response options and to improve consistency in responses among respondents. The question about applying for benefits was eliminated because youth must apply for ETVs, while there is no application process for services and benefits to support a successful transition to adulthood, making the question unnecessary. The term “Independent Living benefits” was changed to “services and benefits to support a successful transition to adulthood” because some respondents were confused about which services were implied. Additionally, according to pilot testers, “independent living” is a phrase used by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in other contexts, adding to the confusion.
- Question 7 in the Program Director survey was revised to include an additional row to distinguish between cultural orientation/integration activities delivered in a class and those delivered one-on-one.
 - Rationale: One respondent was unsure how to answer the original question if they delivered cultural orientation/integration activities one-on-one and not in a class setting. This edit will help them answer accurately.
- Question 8 in the Program Director survey was revised to combine “individual counseling” with “therapy (e.g., trauma-focused or cognitive behavioral interventions).”
 - Rationale: Pilot respondents did not understand the distinction between these items so they were merged.