

# Self-Regulation Training Approaches and Resources to Improve Staff Capacity for Implementing Healthy Marriage Services for Youth (SARHM)

## Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 - 0531

# 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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**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for  
Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

**Part A**

**Executive Summary**

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a generic information collection under the umbrella generic, Formative Data Collections for Program Support (0970-0531).
- **Progress to Date:** This information collection is being carried out as part of the Self-Regulation Training Approaches and Resources to Improve Staff Capacity for Implementing Healthy Marriage Services for Youth (SARHM) project. An earlier generic request was granted to SARHM to pre-test data collection instruments (OMB #0970-0355; Approved July 2018) with five HMRE programs serving youth to develop and refine them for use in a possible future evaluation of the training approaches and materials developed under SARHM.
- **Description of Request:** The purpose of this activity is to conduct focus groups with program participants at up to three Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs, funded by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within ACF, to understand how youth view and understand self-regulation as a construct, how they describe the processes involved in self-regulation, and how they view the role of adults in supporting their self-regulation enactment. Data collected are meant to inform the language and messages that ACF uses for future trainings and training materials about self- and co-regulation for ACF-funded HMRE programs. Data are not meant to be generalized to a broader population. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
- **Time Sensitivity:** For any school-based grantees, we will need to conduct focus groups before the end of the spring 2020 school term, roughly in April 2020. For any community-based grantees, we need to conduct focus groups before the current HMRF funding expires in September 2020.

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The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services seeks approval to conduct focus groups with program participants at up to three Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs funded by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within ACF. This information collection is being carried out as part of the Self-Regulation Training Approaches and Resources to Improve Staff Capacity for Implementing Healthy Marriage Services for Youth (SARHM) project. Approval for this data collection is requested under ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections for program support (0970-0531).

### **A1. Necessity for Collection**

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 created the HMRE grant program, which authorized \$150 million over five years to support program activities aimed at promoting and sustaining healthy marriages, providing relationship education services to youth, and fostering economic stability. The Claims Resolution Act of 2010 re-authorized this grant program, and three-year grants totaling \$150 million were awarded in September 2011 (and subsequently extended through September 2015). In October 2015, ACF awarded five-year grants to 46 HMRE grantees, including 31 grantees serving youth. Youth-serving grantees focus on teaching skills to promote healthy relationships, including conflict resolution, problem solving, goal-setting, and communication skills, and may also integrate job readiness and financial management skills such as budgeting, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

The components of self-regulation—managing one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to enable goal oriented behaviors—are critical for a range of outcomes across the life course, including healthy and stable relationships, educational attainment, employment and economic security, and physical and mental health (Murray and Rosanbalm 2017). The content of HMRE curricula provides opportunities for learning and practicing self-regulation in real-life situations. Also, by focusing on self-regulation, school and community-based HMRE programs for youth can potentially improve their quality.

Language currently used to describe self-regulation in the field is often abstract or overly academic, and not relatable to youth. No research is currently available about how youth talk about self-regulation. Under an earlier generic clearance for pre-testing of instruments (OMB #0970-0355; Approved July 2018), SARHM used an iterative process to develop training approaches and materials and pre-test them with HMRE programs serving youth. Through the iterative process, the language used in several strategies changed as program staff provided input on what language was likely to resonate with their populations. As a result, the SARHM team identified a need for additional research to understand how youth perceive self-regulation and the language they use to talk about it.

This is a discretionary data collection authorized under Sec. 811 (b) Healthy Marriage Promotion and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Grants of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-291, 124 Stat. 3064 (Dec. 8, 2010). A copy of the legislative authority is included as Attachment A.

### **A2. Purpose**

#### *Purpose and Use*

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections for program support (0970-0531):

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- Delivery of targeted assistance related to program implementation.
- Planning for provision of programmatic or evaluation-related training or technical assistance (T/TA).
- Development of learning agendas and research priorities.

OPRE/ACF launched SARHM to develop training approaches and materials to enhance HMRE program educators' ability to support adolescent and young adult self-regulation skill development in the context of HMRE programs. Self-regulation encompasses a critical set of life skills linked to individual success across the lifespan. Although adolescence is a critical time of self-regulation skill development, most evidence-based strategies for supporting self-regulation focus on young children. HMRE programs for youth—with their focus on goal setting, communication skills, and interpersonal relationships—provide a natural context for supporting adolescent and young adult self-regulation skill development.

This information collection will involve focus groups with program participants at up to three ACF-funded HMRE programs to learn how youth discuss self-regulation and describe how they respond in various situations to stay on track to achieve their goals. The results of the proposed information collection will inform messages and training materials designed to enhance ACF-funded HMRE programs' capacity to support youth self-regulation skill development by providing examples of language programs can use in working with youth.

The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on ACF programs. It is not intended to be used as the principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

### *Research Questions or Tests*

The research questions to be answered by the data collection are as follows:

1. How do adolescents and youth participating in ACF-funded HMRE programs describe self-regulation in their own words?
2. How salient do adolescents and youth participating in ACF-funded HMRE programs see self-regulation skills to the events and activities in their lives?

### *Study Design*

SARHM will conduct up to six 90-minute focus groups with program participants across up to three ACF-funded HMRE programs under this clearance. Across the focus groups, we will speak to a maximum of 60 youth (at most, 12 to 14 youth per focus group, but optimally in groups of 8 to 10). The programs and participants will be purposively selected. In particular, we seek to involve programs in school-based and community locations; programs serving younger youth (14-18 years old) and older youth (18-24 years old); operating in a mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings and serving varied populations of vulnerable and at-risk youth, including underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, disconnected youth, and youth living in high-poverty areas. While not representative, this will allow our data collection to reflect the diversity of ACF-funded HMRE populations in terms of program setting, the ages of youth served, and their socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds.

The focus groups will explore the language youth use to describe emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and self-regulation by presenting them with a series of vignettes describing stressful situations. Because of

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the small sample size and limited generalizability, information and language gathered from the focus groups will be presented as examples only.

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instrument(s)</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Focus groups	Instrument 1: Understanding Youth Perceptions of Self-Regulation  Instrument 2: Worksheet for focus group participants	<b>Respondents:</b> Adolescents and youth participating in ACF-funded HMRE programs ages 14-24.  <b>Content:</b> The language youth use to describe emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and self-regulation in a variety of stressful situations  <b>Purpose:</b> To inform future training and training materials for ACF-funded HMRE programs in supporting youth self-regulation skill development	<b>Mode:</b> In-person focus group  <b>Duration:</b> 90 minutes

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

No other data sources will be used in this study.

**A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

Focus group data collection does not involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, other technological collection techniques, or other forms of information technology. The focus groups will be conducted by two study team members. One team member will lead the focus groups by asking questions and the second team member will write down key words and phrases that youth use on a white board or piece of chart paper for youth to see and respond to. Site visit teams will audio record the focus groups with permission from respondents and transcribe them to supplement, correct, or clarify information in the images of the key words and phrases diagrammed during the focus group. We will take photographs of the key words and phrases written on the white board or piece of chart paper. As a part of the focus group, youth will use worksheets designed to help them organize their thinking about each vignette presented. At the end of the focus group, we will collect the worksheets from the youth.

SARHM decided to use focus groups as the means of data collection because the proposed questions for youth are conducive to a group setting. Focus groups mirror the typical HMRE program setting which occurs either in the form of monthly group meetings or in a classroom setting at a school. Additionally, the focus group allows youth to listen and react to other participants' responses.

**A4. Use of Existing Data: Efforts to reduce duplication, minimize burden, and increase utility and government efficiency**

Mathematica used information collected through an earlier generic request granted to SARHM to pre-test data collection instruments (OMB #0970-0355; Approved July 2018) to inform the development of Instruments 1 and 2. The study team is not collecting any information that is available elsewhere. Neither of the instruments ask for information that can be reliably obtained through other sources.

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**A5. Impact on Small Businesses**

The HMRE grantees participating in the study are community-based organizations. We will minimize burden by restricting the length of focus groups to 90 minutes, conducting them at times that are convenient to respondents, and convening them at convenient locations (such as the primary location where youth participate in the HMRE program).

**A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection**

This is a one-time data collection effort.

**A7. Now subsumed under 2(b) above and 10 (below)**

**A8. 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 the overarching generic clearance for formative information collection. This notice was published on October 11, 2017, Volume 82, Number 195, page 47212, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. A subsequent notice, updated with more specific information, was published on June 18, 2019, Volume 84, Number 117, page 28307, and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment periods, no substantive comments were received.

*Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study*

The SARHM project team consulted with external experts to complement the knowledge and experience of the project team. Collectively, these experts have specialized knowledge in HMRE programming for youth, staff training approaches, self-regulation interventions for youth, measurement of self- and co-regulation, and study design and data collection methods relevant to this work. The SARHM expert group was made up of the following people:

- Joseph Allen, University of Virginia
- Marc Brackett, Yale University
- Joshua Brown, Fordham University
- Ronald B. Cox, Oklahoma State University
- Carolyn Rich Curtis, Relationship Skills Center
- Abigail Gewirtz, University of Minnesota
- Mark Greenberg, Pennsylvania State University
- James Mazza, University of Washington
- Velma McBride Murray, Vanderbilt University

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- David Osher, American Institutes of Research
- Kay Reed, The Dibble Institute
- Galena Rhoades, University of Denver
- Emilie Smith, University of Georgia

### **A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

The study team proposes to provide youth focus group participants with a \$25 token of appreciation for their voluntary participation in the data collection. The focus group is expected to take about 90 minutes. Tokens of appreciation are intended to cover incidental expenses of participating in the focus group, such as transportation and child care. Youth participating in HMRE programs are disproportionately underrepresented and high-risk, including racial and ethnic minorities, youth living in high-poverty neighborhoods, and teenage parents (Scott et al. 2017). The focus groups are intended to capture the experiences of youth facing a range of personal challenges. If the study only speaks to youth with low barriers to participation in the study, the resulting data will be less informative for the resulting HMRE trainings and training materials on youth self-regulation.

### **A10. Privacy: Procedures to protect privacy of information, while maximizing data sharing**

#### *Personally Identifiable Information*

Instruments 1 and 2 will not collect any Personally Identifiable Information. We will ask participants to introduce themselves and refer to each other during the focus group using only first names. We are not collecting or asking any other personal information about participants apart from brief first name introductions to set the tone of the group and establish rapport with participants. The worksheets youth will use during the focus groups (Instrument 2) do not ask for any identifying information.

#### *Assurances of Privacy*

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all 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, Mathematica will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. Approval for this study is in progress with Mathematica's Institutional Review Board (IRB) .

#### *Data Security and Monitoring*

This project will comply with Mathematica's data security policies. Only staff from Mathematica will handle data collected under this clearance. Public Strategies staff will not be involved in data collection or analysis. All Mathematica staff involved in the project will receive training on (1) limitations of disclosure; (2) safeguarding the physical work environment; and (3) storing, transmitting, and destroying data securely. All Mathematica staff sign the Mathematica Confidentiality Agreement, complete online security awareness training when they are hired, and receive annual refresher training thereafter. Training addresses security policies and procedures found in the *Mathematica Corporate Security Manual*.

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Focus group audio files, images, notes, and transcripts will be stored in an encrypted project folder on Mathematica’s network. Mathematica uses access control lists to restrict access to the encrypted project folders where sensitive and confidential project data are stored. Access to the project folder is explicitly authorized by the Project Director on need-to-know and least privilege bases. Mathematica staff are required to change their password for computer and network access every thirty days, and passwords must adhere to strict composition standards. Staff access rights to the project folder are revoked when they leave the project. If a staff member leaves Mathematica, his or her access to computing assets, including network access, is terminated.

Physical copies of the key words and phrases (e.g. chart paper) will be destroyed on site. We will convert the hard copies of focus group participants’ worksheets into digital files and store them on the encrypted project folder, and then destroy the hard copies. Hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet in Mathematica’s office until they can be destroyed.

We have no plans to disseminate data sets.

**A11. Sensitive Information**<sup>1</sup>

No sensitive information will be collected.

**A12. Burden**

*Explanation of Burden Estimates*

Across up to six focus groups at up to three HMRE programs, we will recruit no more than 60 youth to participate, with the goal of 8 to 10 participants per focus group. Each focus group will be scheduled for 90 minutes. Total annual burden for the focus group is 90 hours.

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

We estimated the average hourly wage of youth based on the current federal minimum wage (\$7.25).

Instrument	No. of Respondents (total over request period)	No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Focus Groups	60	1	1.5	90	\$7.25	\$652.50

<sup>1</sup> Examples of sensitive topics include (but not limited to): social security number; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships, e.g., family, pupil-teacher, employee-supervisor; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to respondents; religion and indicators of religion; community activities which indicate political affiliation and attitudes; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers; records describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment; receipt of economic assistance from the government (e.g., unemployment or WIC or SNAP); immigration/citizenship status.



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(Instruments 1 &2)						
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**A13. Costs**

There are no additional costs to respondents.

**A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government**

The cost for data collection under this current request will be \$55,294

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Instrument Development and OMB Clearance	\$14,637
Field Work	\$40,657
Publications/Dissemination	\$0
<b>Total costs over the request period</b>	\$55,294
<b>Annual costs</b>	\$55,294

**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for program support (0970-0531).

**A16. Timeline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
February 2020 to March 2020	Obtain OMB and IRB approval
March 2020 to April 2020	Conduct focus groups at up to three HMRE grantees
April to June 2020	Analyze focus group data
July 2020	Submit memo summarizing focus group findings

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Attachments**

Instrument 1: Understanding Youth Perceptions of Self-Regulation

Instrument 2: Responding to the Scenario (worksheet)

Appendix A: Legislative Authority

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**References**

Murray, Desiree, and Katie Rosanbalm. "Promoting Self-Regulation in Adolescents and Young Adults: A Practice Brief." OPRE Brief #2015-82. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

Scott, Mindy, Elizabeth Karberg, Ilana Huz, and Mary Jo Oster. "Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programs for Youth: An In-Depth Study of Federally Funded Programs." OPRE Report #2017-74: Washington, DC. Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.