

Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies Project

**OMB Information Collection Request
Formative Data Collections for ACF Research
0970 - 0356**

Supporting Statement

Part B

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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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B1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This generic information collection request (Gen IC) includes initial activities to inform the Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) Project.

In Stage 1, we plan to gather information from stakeholders in the fields of workforce development, disability employment policy, and employment programs for low-income individuals with complex barriers to employment. The project team will identify informants for Stage 1 through a purposeful, snowball sampling process that draws from recommendations from experts at Mathematica and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, referrals from other informants, and Internet searches of employment interventions. Informants will include policy makers; program administrators and managers; knowledge brokers and intermediaries; employer and social enterprise representatives; program developers and training and technical assistance providers; advocates; and researchers.

The informants will be selected to participate in an iterative fashion based on their expertise and the study's need for information from different sources and localities. The team will return consistently to the list of potential informants to determine which individuals with select expertise should be engaged next given the project team's remaining gaps in knowledge. There is minimal burden involved with this collection, so we expect that nearly 100 percent of the individuals we contact will participate in a discussion. We believe we will identify up to 350 such individuals over the course of the information gathering activities.

In Stage 2, we will contact administrators of programs implementing the interventions that were identified in Stage 1 to gather more in-depth information about their programs. This will help us begin to assess whether the programs would be good candidates for including in the evaluation (for which a full ICR will be submitted). We expect that all of the program administrators we contact will participate in a discussion.

B2. Procedures for Collection of Information

For the semi-structured stakeholder interviews, a senior member of the project team will contact the stakeholder and conduct a short phone or in-person meeting using a semi-structured protocol (Attachment A). The bulk of the stakeholders we have identified so far are those with whom we already have professional relationships. For those we do not, we will send an email (see Attachment C) requesting a meeting.

The interviews with administrators of promising programs will be conducted by one senior and one junior project team member. The senior team members will send up to 30 program administrators a request for a one-hour telephone call via email (see Attachment C). The email will introduce the study and its goals, and offer suggested times for a meeting. The senior team member will lead the meeting using a semi-structured protocol (Attachment B) and answer any questions about the study. The junior team member will take detailed notes. The protocol is designed to collect the minimum information necessary to allow us to understand the program structure and operations, and whether a random assignment study would be feasible.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Expected Response Rates

Participation in this information collection is voluntary. Because there is minimal burden involved with the initial stakeholder interviews, we expect nearly 100 percent participation. We also expect nearly 100 percent participation in the program administrator interviews. These interviews will not be highly burdensome, and we expect that most program administrators will be eager to share information about their innovative interventions with the project team.

Dealing with Nonresponse

We expect little to no nonresponse among key stakeholders because, for the most part, we have existing professional contacts with stakeholders. If a program administrator does not respond to our initial email request for an information-gathering phone call (see Attachment C), we will send the email again. If we do not receive a response to our second email, the team may follow up with a phone call. After three attempts, the project team will not continue to pursue a response.

Maximizing Response Rates

The project team will be accommodating of informants' schedules and will be flexible about the meeting dates and times. The informants will be contacted by a senior member of the project team. These senior members have had significant experience in working closely with stakeholders and program administrators on previous evaluations and have had a high level of success in engaging programs in preliminary discussions such as these.

B4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

The discussion guides will not be pre-tested. Previous large-scale evaluations have successfully used similar instruments during information gathering processes.

B5. Individual(s) Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

This data collection effort will be designed and carried out by senior members of the project team, on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), with ACF oversight and approval. The analysis of the interview data will be qualitative, and statistical methods will not be employed. The key individuals involved in this effort are:

- Hilary Bruck, Senior Social Science Research Analyst, ACF
- Gabrielle Newell, Social Science Research Analyst, ACF
- Marie Lawrence, Contract Social Science Research Analyst, ACF
- Connor Williams, Contract Research Assistant, ACF
- Sheena McConnell, Senior Vice President, Mathematica
- Michelle Derr, Senior Researcher, Mathematica
- David Stapleton, Partner, Tree House Economics
- Annalisa Mastri, Senior Researcher, Mathematica
- Angela Rachidi, Senior Researcher, Mathematica
- Crystal Blyler, Senior Researcher, Mathematica