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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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Subject: NonSubstantive Change Request – Head Start Connects [Case Studies] (OMB #0970-0538)

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved information collection, Head Start Connects [Case Studies] (OMB #0970-0538).

Background

Head Start (HS) Connects received OMB approval for a new data collection to conduct case studies in six Head Start programs as part of the *HS Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Family Support Services* research study on 01/03/2020 (OMB #0970-0538). The case studies will collect qualitative information about how Head Start programs, across varied organizational, community, and system-level contexts, coordinate family support services using processes and practices tailored to individual family needs. We plan to conduct interviews with HS Administrators/Family and Community Partnerships Managers, HS Family Support Workers, Other HS Center Staff, Parents/Guardians, and Community Providers at each case study site.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began, we were finishing all planned landscaping calls and were about to formally recruit our case study sites and begin conducting in-person site visits in Spring 2020. However, in response to the pandemic restrictions placed on travel and in-person work, we canceled the site visits. Given the uncertainty of in-person visits for the immediate future, we propose changing the mode of data collection from in-person site visits to virtual “site visits” where we would conduct interviews by video conference or, if needed, a phone call. We also propose editing the interview protocols to capture information about how the pandemic as affected coordination of family support services in HS.

Overview of Requested Changes

All instruments have been revised to include a few questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected the coordination of family support services, including the services parents need, the services HS programs offer, and the mode of service delivery. To maintain the original burden estimates, as well as to account for the interviews being virtual and thus needing to leave some time for trouble-shooting technology issues, the protocols were streamlined to cut out lower priority questions that indirectly address the research questions and to remove questions that are asked of multiple respondents if they could be asked of only one respondent. See Exhibit 1 for details on the types of changes made to each Instrument.

In line with the changes to the mode of data collection and switch to video conferencing, we also made the following specific edits to the supporting statements:

- We originally planned on a 3-day site visit. We now aim to conduct all of the interviews for a given “site visit” within one week.
- We will now conduct notetaking during all interviews instead of only during interviews where the respondent declines audiotaping.
- We updated the anticipated timeline in Supporting Statement A.
- We updated the timing of the submission of the Data Security Plan to ACF and receipt of IRB approval in Supporting Statement A.
- We updated information on data handling in Supporting Statement B to accommodate data security of audiotapes captured during video conference calls.
- We updated email communication with case study sites to accommodate the switch to a virtual site visit, including the addition of an email reminder about the pre-visit call. We also propose breaking the Head Start Administrator/ Family and Community Partnerships Manager interview into two parts, so we can wrap-up our virtual site visit and confirm the coordination processes learned via staff and parent interviews (Appendices G – I).

Time Sensitivities

Because our timeline for the case studies has been altered, this has implications for the timing of subsequent project activities that rely on completion of the case studies. We would like to aim to begin conducting virtual site visits in August 2020.

Exhibit 1. List of Changes by Instrument.

| Edits: | Instrument edit applies to: | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | #1 - HS Admin- Partnership Manager Pre-visit Call | #2 - HS Family Support Staff Pre-Visit Call | #3 - HS Admin- Partnership Manager Interview | #4 - HS Family Support Staff Interview | #5 - HS Other Staff Interview | #6 - Parent-Guardian Interview | #7 - Community Provider Interview |
| Added questions to understand how the coordination of family support services, including services parents need and how they receive the services, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Cut lower-priority questions (e.g., questions in the background section) to leave room for the COVID-19 questions | | | X | | | | |
| Cut sub-questions to leave time for the COVID-19 questions | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Cut questions from the Supervision, Support, and Professional Development section (as they are asked of the HS Admin/Partnership Manager) to leave time for the COVID-19 questions | | | | X | X | | |
| Cut one of the case narrative case reviews so each Family Support Worker is only asked to report on one case (as opposed to two cases) | | X | | X | | | |
| Re-arranged the order so the Supervision, Support, and Professional Development section comes at the end, during the second part of the interview. | | | X | | | | |
| Re-arranged the order so the section on parent/guardian's skills are asked later on in the protocol, so questions about emergency assistance can be asked first (as they may be more relevant, given the pandemic) | | | | | | X | |
| Edited the introduction to the interview to reflect the switch to virtual interviews | | | X | X | X | X | X |