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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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Date: August 14, 2020

Subject: Non-Substantive Change Request – Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (OMB #0970-0508)

This memo requests approval of non-substantive changes to the approved information collection, Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI; OMB #0970-0508).

Background

Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions: Examining the Quality-Child Outcomes Relationship in Child Care and Early Education (VIQI) is a rigorous experimental study that consists of two phases:

- 1) a year-long pilot study (conducted in 2018-2019); and
- 2) a year-long Impact Evaluation and Process Study (planned for 2020-2021).

OMB approved data collection activities for the Pilot Study and the Impact Evaluation and Process Study on 05/09/2018 (OMB #0970-0508). These data collection activities build on information gathered under the generic clearance: Formative Data Collections for ACF Research (OMB #0970-0356) to understand the landscape of early care and education programs and to aid in the refinement of the study design.

The study team began landscaping and recruitment activities for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study in September 2019. These activities included a combination of emails, calls, and visits with early childhood stakeholders and Head Start and child care programs in various localities to introduce the study, gather information to determine eligibility, and discuss what potential participation in the study would look like. Between September 2019 and April 2020, the study team used roughly 430 burden hours to conduct these activities. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study team had to suspend activities in April 2020. The following request includes proposed adjustments in order to resume activities in Fall 2020 to assess the eligibility of prospective Head Start and community-based child care centers in meeting the sampling criteria for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study in light of the evolving circumstances around the COVID-19 pandemic.

Time Sensitivities

We need to resume landscaping and recruitment activities before the end of August 2020. Based on our previous experience recruiting large numbers of Head Start and community-based child

care centers across many localities, we will need at least nine months to complete landscaping and recruitment activities and sign agreements with individual centers before the end of the academic year (when many centers close for the summer).

Overview of Requested Changes

The specific revisions being requested as non-substantive changes to the VIQI project’s approved OMB package (OMB #0970-0508) are as follows:

- 1) To adjust the timing of landscaping and recruitment activities in order to accommodate delays caused by COVID-19;
- 2) To adjust the mode of data collection to allow the study team to collect information using the landscaping and recruitment protocols remotely (i.e., via video conferencing or by phone);
- 3) To add prompts to allow the study team to understand each center’s past operations and alignment with the sampling criteria prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how the COVID-19 pandemic affects their current operations, and how they anticipate COVID-19 pandemic may affect their future operations, so that we can assess whether they continue to meet eligibility criteria for VIQI;
- 4) To update landscaping and recruitment protocols to acknowledge any prior level of engagement the respondent may have had with the study team prior to COVID-19; and
- 5) To remove from the landscaping and recruitment protocols questions that did not yield useful insights in determining sampling eligibility of HS and community-based child care centers during the pilot study. These cuts to the protocols are being made so that the overall protocol administration length still fits within the estimated burden per protocol as currently outlined in the approved OMB package for the VIQI project

The proposed changes do not impact burden estimates for respondents. The specific revisions to each instrument are outlined below.

Document/Instrument	Overview of Changes
Attachment A.1 – Landscaping Protocols with Stakeholder Agencies and Related Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added recruitment questions that are designed to help us better understand the early care and education (ECE) landscape in localities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of each locality’s ability to participate in the Impact Evaluation and Process Study • Adjusted estimates regarding time required for discussions (i.e. discussions with previously-engaged localities and programs will be shorter, because the team already gathered a set of information during the 2020 recruitment period, which was suspended due to COVID-19) • Removed questions that have not been useful in prior landscaping/recruitment discussions
Attachment A.2 – Screening Protocol for Phones Calls and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edited email templates to include introductory language that acknowledges uncertainties surrounding COVID-19

<p>Related Materials</p>	<p>and explains why the VIQI team is contacting centers at this point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edited language to note that the team will most likely conduct recruitment and landscaping via phone calls and video conferences instead of in-person visits, due to COVID-19 • Added questions that are designed to help us better understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ program/center stability and eligibility for the study (e.g. changes in number of eligible classrooms, changes in enrollment of three and four-year-olds); ○ program/center operations (e.g. changes in curricula or mode of instruction, professional development, etc.); and ○ program/center plans for upcoming year (e.g., taking on new initiatives, etc.) • Added minor revisions for clarity based on initial landscaping and recruitment discussions • Removed questions that have not been useful in prior recruitment discussions
<p>Attachment A.3 – Protocol for Follow-Up Calls/Visits for Screening and Recruitment Activities and Related Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edited language to note that the team will most likely conduct recruitment and landscaping via phone calls and video conferences instead of in-person visits, due to COVID-19 • Made revisions to the introductory emails and scripts that allow for follow-up discussion around COVID-19 circumstances and eligibility, if necessary • Made minor edits for clarity based on initial landscaping and recruitment discussions • Added a few questions to help us better understand the quality of data that could be used to understand initial levels of quality