

# **Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Project**

**OMB Information Collection Request**

**0970-0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part A**

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: FCL Semistructured Protocol for Initial Agency Phone Meeting

Appendix B: FCL Semistructured Protocol for Teleconference or Agency Visit

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: FCL Phone Meeting Email Template

Attachment B: FCL Project Description

Attachment C: FCL Topics for Initial Agency Phone Meeting

Attachment D: FCL Agenda for Agency Staff Meeting

## **A1. Necessity for the Data Collection**

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) seeks approval to collect information from select child welfare agencies and key partners for the Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare (FCL) project. The study team will collect information via telephone calls and in-person conversations at the child welfare agencies and possible partner agencies. The submitted discussion guides, if approved, will be used for this information collection. The purpose is to gather preliminary information about the child welfare field to inform the FCL study, which will involve a 12-month pilot study of a continuous learning approach to engaging fathers and paternal relatives of children involved in child welfare. Approval to contact organizations for this purpose is requested under ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections.

### ***Study Background***

ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) has launched the FCL study. This study plans to identify and adapt a continuous learning approach for implementing promising strategies to increase fathers' and paternal relatives' engagement in the child welfare system. The study team will review the evidence in the areas of father/paternal relative engagement in child welfare and identify promising approaches to increase their engagement. The study team will also review potential touchpoints within the child welfare system for engaging fathers and paternal relatives, as well the literature on the use of continuous learning approaches in child welfare. Building on this, we plan to conduct a pilot study of the feasibility of using the continuous learning approach and engagement strategies in four child welfare sites. A full evaluation informed by the pilot might be completed later.

Father involvement is related to positive child welfare outcomes, including a reduced likelihood of entry into foster care, shorter stints in foster care, and increased rates of reunification (Bellamy 2009; Coakley 2008). Yet, systematic reviews of strategies to engage fathers and other paternal relatives in child welfare and other family services reveal little empirical evidence to guide practice with fathers (for example, Gordon et al. 2012; Panter-Brick et al. 2014). This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature and address the longstanding challenge of engaging fathers and their relatives in the child welfare system.

The current generic information collection (GenIC) request is to gather preliminary data to help inform the design of the FCL pilot study.

### ***Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection***

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

## **A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures**

### ***Overview of Purpose and Approach***

The purpose of the current GenIC is to gather preliminary information from child welfare agencies about current practices around father and paternal relative engagement, and explore design options for FCL that may be feasible to implement. The study team will use the information gathered to make recommendations to ACF about the FCL study design. After this information gathering phase, ACF plans

to submit a full information collection request package for future data collection for the study, including baseline data collection, implementation data collection, and follow-up data collection for measuring outcomes.

The study team will work with the federal partners and members of the project's experts and stakeholders group already working with the study team to nominate sites that would provide useful information about the range of existing strategies for engaging fathers/paternal relatives and continuous learning approaches in the field. The goal is to obtain a list of 10 sites through these channels. To minimize burden on child welfare agencies, the study team will review information obtained on agency websites and other available information on the agencies. For these agencies, we will also collect more in-depth information, for example, the number of children served and current strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives.

Further information on each child welfare agency will be obtained by semistructured telephone and in-person discussions with directors or supervisors in the child welfare agencies and, if appropriate, their partner agencies. The submitted instruments, the discussion guides, will serve to guide these semistructured discussions. It is not expected that all the information on the discussion guides will be collected from all child welfare agencies or their partners. Some of the information will already have been collected from other sources, such as the agencies' website and federal data systems on numbers and types of child welfare cases.

The information collection will take place over the summer and fall 2018 to ensure that the study design can be finalized in time to begin the 12-month pilot study, which is planned to begin in late 2018. The information gathered in this GenIC may be used to identify candidate agencies for the larger pilot study.

### ***Research Questions***

This information collection will explore the following research questions:

1. What is the range of characteristics of child welfare agencies currently operating in the field, including the agency's, administrative structures, experience serving fathers and paternal relatives, services offered, community service contexts, and capacities?
2. Given the proposed research questions for FCL and potential design options, what feedback do child welfare agencies have in terms of a) the importance of the questions to the field; b) their interest in the potential continuous learning models and engagement strategies; and c) the feasibility of the potential design options?

### ***Study Design***

This collection serves as a preliminary step to gather information that will inform the design of the larger FCL pilot study. The study team will work with OPRE and other ACF agencies, hold individualized or small group conversations with practice and research experts in the field, and conduct internet searches to identify a sample of up to 10 child welfare agencies to contact. A limitation is that this process will not yield a representative sample of child welfare agencies, but it will identify many of the child welfare agencies that have a history of using innovative strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives or a desire to increase fathers' and paternal relatives' engagement.

Upon OMB approval of the information collection instruments, the study team will send each agency director a request via email for a one-hour telephone call (see FCL Phone Meeting Email Template; Attachment A). The email, addressed to agency directors, will introduce the study and its goals, the team that is conducting the study on ACF's behalf, and offer suggested times for a phone meeting. An attachment to the email will contain the project description (see FCL Project Description, Attachment B) and a list of topics for discussion during the phone call (see FCL Topics for Initial Phone Meeting; Attachment C). The phone meeting is voluntary. The study team will lead the telephone meeting using a semistructured protocol (see FCL Semistructured Protocol for Initial Agency Phone Meeting; Appendix A). The study team will answer any questions about the study and ask for select agency information, such as the agency's administrative structure, experience, distribution of cases (for example, in-home cases compared with child placement cases), and approach to engaging fathers and paternal relatives. The protocol is designed to collect the minimum information necessary to enable the study team to understand the range of approaches used to engage fathers and paternal relatives, the range of perspectives on the FCL study, and whether particular study design options will be feasible given the structure of child welfare agencies. The study team will contact up to 10 agencies for an initial telephone call, with up to 3 staff per agency participating in the call.

With a select group of agencies (up to 7, with up to 5 staff per agency participating), the study team will follow up the initial phone call with a request for further discussion. These agencies will be selected based on: (1) interest in the FCL study design, (2) range of father and paternal relative engagement strategies that the agency is already implementing, and/or would be interested in implementing, and (3) organizational capacity for continuous learning. The follow-up will involve an in-person visit to the site. An agenda will serve to guide the discussions (see FCL Agenda for Agency Staff Meeting; Attachment D). Using a semistructured protocol (FCL Semistructured Protocol for Teleconference or Agency Visit; Appendix B), the study team will seek to better understand the agency's flow and solicit feedback about the potential study designs. Subsequent individualized visits and teleconferences will be scheduled as needed and with a narrower pool of programs if the study team needs additional time to gather the information.

The selection of agencies will be prioritized in such a way to maximize the range of responses possible that may inform FCL design and planning.

There are no quantitative components to this portion of the study.

### ***Universe of Data Collection Efforts***

There are two main data collection efforts involved with the current request for approval.

(1) FCL Semi Structured Protocol for Initial Agency Phone Meeting (Appendix A): This is an initial one-hour phone call that will use a semistructured discussion protocol. For this collection, the study team will also use an email template (Attachment A), the project description (Attachment B), and a list of topics for the discussion (Attachment C).

(2) FCL Semi Structured Protocol for Teleconference or Agency Visit (Appendix B): These are subsequent 3-hour visits or teleconferences based on a semistructured interview protocol. For this collection, the study team will also use the agency staff meeting agenda (Attachment D) and the project description (Attachment B).

Both protocols cover similar research questions. However, there is additional time allotted for the visits and teleconferences to enable more detail to be shared about the FCL project, and for the child welfare agency, (and, if appropriate, its partner agencies), to share more details about its services and operations.

### **A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

The information in this ICR, collected through semistructured discussions with the child welfare agencies or partners, is not conducive to the use of information technology, such as computerized interviewing. Telephone conversations and site visits offer the best opportunity to tailor interviews to the specific child welfare agency (or partner) with the least imposed burden on the agency (or partner). If in-person conversations are determined to be more appropriate, the study teams will travel to the agency (or partner) to conduct the semistructured discussions.

### **A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

For this ICR, the study team will not collect information from the child welfare agencies until a thorough review has occurred of the agencies' website and other available information (for example, written documents on father engagement). The study team will not collect information directly from the child welfare agencies and partners that is available from existing sources.

### **A5. Involvement of Small Organizations**

Local child welfare agencies and small, nonprofit partner organizations will be included in the study. The study team will minimize burden for respondents by restricting the interview length to the minimum required, conducting site visits and interviews at times convenient for the respondents, and requiring no record keeping or written responses.

### **A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

For this data collection phase, ACF seeks to collect information that will inform the design of the larger 12-month pilot study of using a continuous learning approach to increase fathers' and paternal relatives' engagement in child welfare. Without this information, ACF risks selecting strategies or approaches that are not feasible or not reflective of what is of interest to the field. This data collection is crucial to ensuring that findings from the pilot study are relevant to program administrators; federal, state, and local policymakers; researchers; and the children and families who could benefit from the program services. To limit the burden of this stage of data collection, the study team proposes a multi-staged process for gathering information from child welfare agencies and key partners. The approach attempts to limit the scope of conversations to just the information needed for the current phase of the project. Further, by conducting initial telephone calls with a larger number of agencies, the study team will avoid undue burden because not all conversations will warrant follow-up visits or telephone calls.

### **A7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

## **A8. Federal Register Notice and 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 this information collection activity. This notice was published on September 15, 2014, Volume 79, Number 178, page 54985, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, the government did not receive any comments in response to the Federal Register notice.

### ***Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study***

A panel of experts in child welfare services, fatherhood services, research, and staff from ACF agencies will consult with the FCL study team and OPRE staff in spring 2018.

## **A9. Incentives for Respondents**

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

## **A10. Privacy of Respondents**

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all federal and departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. Respondents are not considered human subjects, but they will still be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, that some of the information they provide will be shared with OPRE to help the study team design the study, and that any information they request to be kept private will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

## **A11. Sensitive Questions**

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

## **A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden**

Agency directors will review materials and speak with the study team member about their child welfare agency. These persons will not incur any expense other than the time spent answering questions.



### Total Burden Hours Requested Under this Information Collection

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
FCL Semistructured Protocol for Initial Agency Phone Meeting	30	1	1	30	\$31.01	\$930.30
FCL Semistructured Protocol for Teleconference or Agency Visit	35	1	3	105	\$31.01	\$3,256.05
<b>Estimated Annual Burden total</b>				135		\$4,186.35

#### **Total Annual Cost**

To compute the total estimated annual cost associated with the value of burden hours, the total burden hours were multiplied by the estimated average hourly wage for agency directors (see table above). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Employment Statistics* (2016), the mean hourly wage, nationally, for social and community service managers is \$31.01.

#### **A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers**

There are no direct costs to respondents.

#### **A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government**

The total/annual cost for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$463,285.

#### **A15. Change in Burden**

This is a new GenIC under the ACF/OPRE Formative Generic (0970-0356).

**A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication**

The information collected will serve primarily to plan the research design and subsequent data collection efforts for the FCL project. Initial calls to agency directors for the purpose of information gathering will take place starting in Quarter 3 2018, and continue into Quarter 4 2018. The study team will conduct site visits and additional teleconferences during Quarter 4 2018. There are no plans to publish the information collected under this request. Plans for use of data collected for the pilot study will be explained in a subsequent package.

**A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date**

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

**A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

## REFERENCES

- Bellamy, J.L. "A National Study of Male Involvement Among Families in Contact with the Child Welfare System." *Child Maltreatment*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2009, pp. 255–262.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Employment Statistics*. Available at [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm). Accessed January 2, 2018.
- Coakley, T.M., A. Kelley, and R. Bartlett. "Exploring Child Welfare Workers' Attitudes and Practices with Fathers." *Journal of Family Strengths*, vol. 14, no. 1, article 11, 2014.
- Gordon, D.M., A. Oliveros, S.W. Hawes, D.K. Iwamoto, and B.S. Rayford. "Engaging Fathers in Child Protective Services: A Review of Factors and Strategies Across Ecological Systems." *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 34, no. 8, 2012, pp. 1399–1417.
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