

# **Head Start Connects**

**Formative Data Collections for ACF Research**

**0970 - 0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part A**

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Submitted By:  
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## 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 for a series of tailored, semi-structured discussions under ACF’s Generic Clearance for Information Collection (IC) to inform the design of activities planned under the *Head Start Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Family Support Services (HS Connects)* project. HS Connects is a research project sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) intended to build knowledge about how Head Start programs (Head Start or Early Head Start grantees, delegate agencies, and staff) across the country coordinate family well-being support services for parents/guardians and tailor services to individual family needs. Family well-being support services for parents and guardians include the following: education, employment services, financial capability services, emergency or crisis intervention services, substance abuse treatment, physical health services, and mental health services. Throughout this package, these services will be referred to as “family support services.”

This Generic Information Collection Request (GenIC) includes collection of preliminary information about the landscape of Head Start programs with respect to how they coordinate family support services. Data collected will be used to inform the development of the HS Connects case study design and the identification of programs for potential inclusion as case studies sites as part of the larger HS Connects project (full OMB clearance will be sought for case studies and other data collection efforts under HS Connects). The GenIC is expected to begin upon OMB approval and continue for approximately nine months.

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of ACF’s generic clearance for formative data collections (0970-0356):

- inform the development of ACF research
- maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant

Table 1. Summary of Generic ICR

Status of Study	This is a new information collection as part of the HS Connects project.
IC Goal	To understand the range of ways in which Head Start programs coordinate family support services.
Intended use of resulting data	To inform the development of the HS Connects case study design and to learn more about Head Start programs that could potentially be candidates to participate in case studies as part of the larger HS Connects project. The information will inform a full ICR to be submitted in the future.
Data collection methods	One-on-one or small group discussions with (a) 15 key informants and (b) 24 representatives from 12 Head Start programs will be facilitated by telephone or video conference. Members of the study team will facilitate the discussions, and detailed notes will be taken.
Populations to be studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants will include regional, state, or local administrators; researchers; policy experts; representatives of national organizations; and/or technical assistance providers.</li> <li>• Representatives from Head Start programs will include administrators and staff with knowledge of the processes for coordinating family support services.</li> </ul>

Data analysis plan	<p>Data will be systematically reviewed and synthesized by the project team. Topics of interest for calls with key informants include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Head Start programs approach the coordination of family support services, including how family needs are assessed and service recommendations are individualized, and the extent to which there is variation in the coordination of family support services</li> <li>• Factors that contribute to variation in programs' coordination of family support services</li> <li>• Recommendations for Head Start programs for the study team to consider for inclusion in the case studies</li> </ul> <p>Topics of interest for calls with representatives of Head Start programs will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of and expansion upon program information found in the Program Information Report (PIR), including program size, structure, services delivered, and population served</li> <li>• Approach to the coordination of family support services in several domains, including, but not limited to, assessing family needs, monitoring service use, and utilizing data systems</li> </ul>
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### **Study Background**

*Note: This section goes beyond a description of the current Generic ICR by providing background on and plans for the full HS Connects project. This ICR is an initial step, with subsequent ICRs expected to be submitted in the future to cover the activities in the remaining phases of the HS Connects project.*

HS Connects is a research project sponsored by OPRE through a task order to MDRC and its subcontractors, MEF Associates and NORC at the University of Chicago.

One of the hallmarks of Head Start is its whole-family approach to the services it provides. This approach is informed by evidence that low-income parents face challenges related to health, safety, and financial stability that can affect their well-being, economic mobility, and ability to provide stable, enriching, and responsive environments for their children (Danziger, Kalil & Anderson, 2000; Lennon, Bloome, & English, 2001; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Yoshikawa, 2012). The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) outline expectations for programs to provide a comprehensive, integrated set of services tailored to the individual needs of parents and families, as well as to the needs and resources of local communities. However, reflecting the community flexibility that is fundamental to Head Start, the HSPPS do not specifically outline *how* family support services should be coordinated within a program.

Existing data sources provide broad snapshots of the coordination of family support services, but important details are lacking:

- Existing sources do not capture the specific, diverse strategies across the Head Start landscape for coordinating family support services that are tailored to families' needs.
- Existing sources provide limited insights into the implementation and the inherent challenges that Head Start programs confront as they coordinate family support services.
- Prior studies only provide suggestive, indirect empirical evidence about the consistency between how services are currently being coordinated and how theory or conceptual frameworks posit that family support services would be associated with family outcomes.

Models for case management and coordination used by Head Start programs for the coordination of family support services are likely to vary. While most programs coordinate family support services via referrals (Aikens et al., 2017), some Head Start programs use more integrated service delivery models (Sama-Miller et al., 2017). More integrated service delivery models have garnered attention because they might increase parent engagement in services. Yet, the prevalence of such models and the organizational and community contexts that allow for their development have not been studied systematically in prior large-scale Head Start research. The extant research leaves open many questions about coordination of family support services.

The purpose of HS Connects is to fill this gap in knowledge with a multi-phase research project. Following a literature review and the development of a theory of change articulating pathways between activities related to the coordination of family support services and expected child and family outcomes, the research team will conduct six case studies of Head Start programs. The case studies will provide the opportunity to examine, in detail, six sites to better understand their processes and potential variation in approaches to coordinating family support services across programs. The case studies are intended to further inform the theory of change, refinement of the research questions, and the development of design options for a large-scale descriptive study of Head Start programs nationally that is focused on describing the coordination of family support services in Head Start and the degree to which coordination is tailored to family needs.

This GenIC supports the design of the case studies and the identification of programs that potentially could be included in HS Connects as case study sites, as described in detail below.

### ***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***

HS Connects will include in-depth case studies of six Head Start programs representing variation in their approaches to the coordination of family support services (the case study design will be submitted to OMB under a separate clearance request). The GenIC described here serves to inform the development of the case study design and to support the identification of potential case study sites. More specifically, the proposed GenIC serves several interrelated purposes:

- First, the GenIC will yield information about the range of ways in which family support services are coordinated and the factors that influence these processes, offering important data to the project team as it designs future phases of HS Connects, including the case studies.
- Second, the GenIC will solicit recommendations for Head Start programs that reflect variability in how they coordinate family support services, from which candidate sites for case studies can be identified.
- Third, the GenIC will gather information about how a selection of Head Start programs coordinate family support services, to inform the identification of a subset of six of these programs for potential participation in in-depth case studies.

- Fourth, the GenIC will confirm program information from the PIR and explore the feasibility of conducting case studies in six sites, including American Indian/Alaska Native or Migrant Seasonal Head Start programs.

The GenIC will proceed in two phases. In **Phase 1**, the research team will hold discussions with **key informants**. Through a series of tailored, semi-structured one-on-one and small group calls, the research team will solicit information about the range of ways Head Start programs coordinate family support services. Key informants also will identify Head Start programs that potentially vary in their coordination processes. Twelve programs, from the list generated by key informants along with the project team, the project's expert advisors, and the COR, will be selected for further exploration and possible inclusion in HS Connects as case study sites.

In **Phase 2**, the research team will hold discussions with **representatives of Head Start programs**, some or all of which will have been identified by key informants. Through a series of semi-structured calls, the research team will (1) explore their approaches to coordinating family support services; (2) invite representatives to confirm and expand upon program information found in the PIR, and (3) explore the feasibility of conducting case studies in their respective programs.

We expect to hold up to two calls per program; each call will include two-to-three representatives from given Head Start programs. Information from these calls will be used to identify a subset of six programs that reflect variability in approaches to coordinating family support services and in other program characteristics such as size, structure, location, and population served, and that have few to no barriers to participating in HS Connects as case study sites.

### ***Research Questions***

This GenIC is guided by the following research questions:

- How do Head Start programs vary in their approach to coordinating family support services that are tailored to families' needs?
- What factors contribute to this variation?
- Which programs illustrate this variation in approaches to coordinating family support services?
- How and to what extent does the coordination of family support services differ in American Indian/Alaska Native or migrant/seasonal Head Start programs?

### ***Study Design and Universe of Data Collection Efforts***

The GenIC will take place in two phases, with two respective groups of participants, and will include two data collection protocols:

- **Discussion guide for key informants** (Attachment A)
- **Discussion guide for representatives of Head Start programs** (Attachment B)

### ***Phase 1: Discussions with Key Informants***

In the first phase, the research team will hold semi-structured discussions by phone or video conference with 15 **key informants**. Selected for their knowledge of Head Start and coordination of family support services, as well as their familiarity with Head Start programs, key informants will include regional, state, or local administrators; researchers; policy experts; representatives of national organizations; and/or technical assistance providers. These informants bring diverse perspectives, as they interact with Head Start programs in different ways. Their collective expertise will be critical as the project team seeks to

develop a thorough understanding of programs' coordination of family support services. The discussions, facilitated by one or more members of the research team, will solicit information about the range of ways in which Head Start programs coordinate family support services. Discussions will be tailored according to participants' background and expertise to best elicit information about the landscape of family support service coordination.

Throughout the discussion, facilitators will ask key informants to recommend Head Start programs for consideration for inclusion in HS Connects as case study sites. The project team will seek the names of programs that reflect common practices as well as programs with unique practices in a variety of domains (see Attachment A: Discussion Guide for Key Informants). Information from key informant interviews will be captured in detailed written notes, taken by a member of the research team; content will be synthesized across interviews to develop a thorough understanding of the range of ways in which Head Start programs approach the coordination of family support services. A list of Head Start programs recommended for case studies by key informants will be compiled across interviews.

### ***Phase 2: Discussions with Representatives from Head Start Programs***

From the list of programs generated in the key informant discussions, along with information gathered from the project's COR, stakeholders, and advisory panels, the research team will identify 12 programs for further exploration and commence the second phase of the GenIC. The 12 programs will be selected such that they, collectively, reflect variation in multiple aspects of the coordination of family support services, as well as program size, structure, and population served (to the extent possible).

**Representatives of Head Start programs**, including administrators (e.g., program and/or center directors, family and community engagement manager) and other staff (e.g., teachers, family services workers) familiar with the coordination of family support services will be invited to participate in discussions. Speaking to staff in different positions will be necessary to develop sufficient understanding of programs' approaches to the coordination of family support services to inform later site selection for the case studies.

Per program, we expect to have about two calls, each with two-to-three representatives. Again, one or more members of the research team will facilitate the discussions by phone or video conference using a semi-structured discussion guide (see Attachment B). Initial questions will seek to ascertain information about program characteristics that may affect the coordination of family support services, including program size, structure, staffing, and population served. Some of this information may be available in the PIR, though data may be incomplete or lack context. The project team will examine a program's PIR before the first call and use the discussion to confirm relevant data, also offering staff a chance to expand upon it. The study team will ask respondents to provide general information about how family support services are coordinated. Areas of interest relate to programs' approaches to assessing families' needs, creating family partnership plans, referring families to services, monitoring service use, and utilizing data systems. The study team will take detailed notes on each call; the team will use the information therein to compare programs and identify those that may be best suited for HS Connects case study sites.

Ultimately, the goal is to identify a set of six Head Start programs that, collectively, reflect maximum variability in their approaches to coordinating family support services and appear ready to participate in case studies. Program size, structure, location, and population served will also be considered, with a goal of achieving variation in the sample of programs.

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

Invitations to participate in discussions will be sent by e-mail, and discussions will be facilitated by phone or video call.

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

The project team is conducting a thorough search of peer-reviewed and “gray” literature to identify systematic studies of Head Start programs’ coordination of family support services. As described above (Section A1, Study Background), existing data sources do not offer in-depth descriptions or analyses of programs’ strategies for coordinating family support services. For this proposed GenIC, the project team has examined available data sources, including PIR and the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), and concluded that specific information needed for identification and exploration of Head Start programs that vary in the processes by which they coordinate family support services (e.g., assessing needs, tracking referrals) is lacking, may be incomplete, or may be without context. Broadly, HS Connects aims to address these gaps in knowledge; the case studies will be the first step in this process.

However, in order to reduce burden on respondents, the project team will use information that is available in the PIR to develop a preliminary understanding of programs from which data will be collected. This information includes program size, enrollment, structure, services offered, and information about the population served. During the discussions with representatives from Head Start programs, the project team will ask participants to confirm what is in the PIR and expand upon it as necessary.

Further, in order to identify potential case study sites, the project team will need to develop a qualitative understanding of how programs coordinate family support services. While there is some information about programs’ approaches in the PIR, few specifics are conveyed in available data sources. Practices may be informal or more complex than can be captured in the PIR; the guided discussions proposed in this GenIC are necessary to understand these practices in sufficient detail to identify potential case study sites. As such, the discussions proposed in this GenIC do not duplicate other known efforts.

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

As we will be selecting programs that vary in size, approximately 50 percent of respondents, including most of the representatives of Head Start programs, are expected to be employed in small organizations, usually small- to mid-size, non-profit child care centers or umbrella organizations. Burden will be reduced for all participants, including employees of small organizations, by scheduling discussions at times convenient to respondents and restricting discussion length to 60 minutes.

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

This request is for a one-time information collection.

### **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 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. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received.

### **A9. Incentives for Respondents**

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

### **A10. Privacy of Respondents**

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, 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 will develop a Data Security Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' personally identifiable information. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees who perform work under this contract/subcontract are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. All requirements will be included in agreements with subcontractors (at all tiers), to apply to relevant employees of each subcontractor.

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive information during storage and transmission. The Contractor shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information, in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. The Contractor shall: ensure that this standard is incorporated into the Contractor's property management/control system; establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and other applicable Federal and Departmental regulations. In addition, the Contractor must submit a plan for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on paper records and for the protection of any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain sensitive or personally identifiable information that ensures secure storage and limits on access.

Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

### **A11. Sensitive Questions**

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

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

All calls will take place within 9 months.



We estimate up to 15 key informants will participate in discussions that will be limited to 90 minutes. Each key informant will participate in one discussion.

We will speak to representatives from 12 Head Start programs; we expect to have about two calls per program, with two to three staff members on each call. Each call will last no more than 60 minutes.

### **Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection**

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Annual Number of Respondents <sup>1</sup>	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Discussion guide for key informants	15	5	1	1.5	7.5	\$31.50	\$236.25
Discussion guide for representatives of Head Start programs	36	12	2	1	24	\$31.50	\$756.00
<b>Annual # of Respondents:</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Burden Total:</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Cost Total:</b>	<b>\$992.25</b>

### **Total Annual Cost**

Assumptions for estimating the total annual cost follow:

- Respondents will have a bachelor’s degree or higher and work full time. The average hourly wage was computed by dividing the average weekly wage for individuals 25 or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher by the average number of hours spent at work by full-time workers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey:
  - The average weekly wage for individuals age 25 or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher was \$1,340 in Q4 of 2018 (Table 5. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2018 averages, not seasonally adjusted; <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf>).
  - Persons working full-time jobs in nonagricultural industries in 2018 were at work an average of 42.5 hours in 2018 (Table 19. Persons at work in agricultural and nonagricultural industries by hours of work) <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat19.pdf>).

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

There are no additional costs to respondents.

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

<sup>1</sup> Annualized over the three year period of the umbrella generic

The total cost for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$15,638. This includes direct and indirect expenses that would not have been incurred without this GenIC.

**A15. Change in Burden**

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for ACF research (0970-0356).

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

Calls with key informants will begin upon OMB approval of this GenIC, lasting approximately 4 months. Calls with Head Start program representatives will follow, lasting approximately 4 months. Qualitative analysis of discussions (described in SSB) will be ongoing as data are collected and continue for approximately one month after completion of all calls. Information collection and analysis are expected to be completed approximately 9 months after OMB approval. There are no plans to publish data collected as part of this ICR.

Task	Targeted Start	Anticipated Duration
Discussions with key informants	Upon OMB approval	4 months
Discussions with representatives of Head Start programs	6 weeks after OMB approval	4 months

**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.